

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. An image forming apparatus comprising:

an image forming unit which accommodates an image forming module for forming an image on a recording sheet supplied thereto; and

a sheet supply unit being disposed in parallel with the image forming unit, the sheet supplying unit having one or plural sheet supply trays and a unit case accommodating the trays, and feeding recording sheets stocked in the sheet supply trays to the image forming unit, wherein sheet feeding paths from at least some of the sheet supply trays to the image forming unit are constructed as a bypass feeding path extending from the farther sides of the sheet supply trays from the image forming unit, and a cover which is opened or closed and disposed to face the bypass feeding path is provided to the farther side of the unit case from the image forming unit.

2. The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cover has one of a pair of feeding members provided to the bypass feeding path, and the nip state between the feeding members is released when the cover is opened.

3. The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the sheet feeding paths from at least some of the sheet supply trays to the image forming unit are constructed as a direct-coupled feeding path extending from the sides of the sheet feeding trays that are nearer to the image forming unit.

4. A sheet supply unit for use in an image forming apparatus having an image forming unit which accommodates an image forming module for forming an image on a recording sheet supplied thereto, the sheet supply unit being disposed in parallel with the image forming unit and feeding to the image forming unit recording sheets stocked in one or plural sheet supply trays, and the sheet supply unit comprising:

a unit case which accommodates the one or plural sheet supply trays;

sheet feeding paths from at least some of the sheet supply trays to the image forming unit, which paths are constructed as a bypass feeding path extending from the farther sides of the sheet supply trays from the image forming unit; and

a cover which is opened or closed and disposed to face the bypass feeding path is provided to the farther side of the unit case from the image forming unit.

5. An image forming apparatus comprising:

a sheet supply unit which has one or plural sheet supply trays and feeds recording sheets stocked in the sheet supply trays to the outside; and

an image forming unit which is disposed in parallel with the sheet supply unit and accommodates an image forming module for forming an image only on a recording sheet supplied from an external sheet supply source containing at least the sheet supply unit.